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Yazid, Sylvia; Dewi, Elisabeth S.

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Women on the Steering Wheel: Identifying the Potentials of Women in Improving the Protection of Indonesian Women Migrant Workers

Sylvia Yazid

Parahyangan Catholic University, Indonesia

Elisabeth S. Dewi

Parahyangan Catholic University, Indonesia

Abstract

This paper is based on a research that looked into the potentials of women as stakeholders in improving the protection of Indonesian women migrant workers abroad. It was designed based on the assumptions that an identification of the potentials of women at various levels and in different institutions may positively contribute to the efforts of finding solutions for the problems faced by women migrant workers. Rather than being seen merely as victims, women should be seen as actors who can actively participate in addressing the problems. This paper analyzes efforts made by a number of Indonesian women who are publicly recognized for their works in promoting the protection of Indonesian women migrant workers, both as state and non-state actors in the context of policy making. The focus is on how these women perceive the extent to which their efforts have been able to influence the policy making process. The discussion also includes how the women responded to the challenges and opportunities that they encounter as part of their learning process. The data for this paper was gathered through interviews with six prominent woman figures who are known for their work on the issue of women migrant workers. While confirming that as actors outside the government these women have made efforts to influence the policy making process, this paper showcases that the actual impact of their efforts is highly determined by the policy environment.

Keywords: Women, Policy Actors, Policy Making, Protection of Women Migrant Workers

Introduction

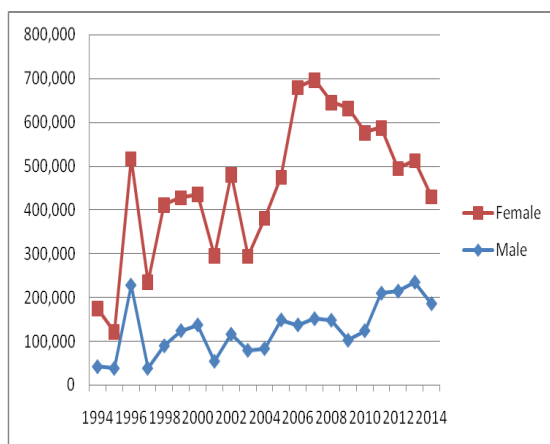
The research for this paper is underpinned by two main issues, the first being the high number of Indonesian women working abroad in the informal sector doing temporary, contract based, and informal works and the second being the potentials of Indonesian women themselves in improving the protection of their fellow

women citizens who are working abroad. The first stage of the research was focused on identifying the women public figure in Indonesia's labour migration system, perceived to be potential in improving the protection for the women migrant workers. The initial findings were presented in TU Dortmund, Germany and published in *Jurnal Global & Strategis* (Yazid 2015). The research was then continued by actually

interviewing a number of selected respondents at the national level. This second stage of the research was framed by concepts from policy studies with the focus on how actors outside the government can influence the making of policies on migrant workers.

The first publication has highlighted the development of labour migration from Indonesia and the feminization of this type of migration. Although the data on labour migration from Indonesia is very much limited and unreliable, particularly as it does not include undocumented migrants ones, the general trend of the placement of Indonesian workers abroad can be seen in Figure 1 below:

Figure 1. Placement of Indonesian Workers Abroad Based on Gender 1994-2014



Source: Created based on the data from BNP2TKI (2015)

The above chart shows how the numbers of female migrant workers are continuously above those of male. This has contributed to the growing attention toward the feminization of labour migration. Other contributing factors are the micro and macro economic significance of the remittances they bring into the country and the problematic characteristic of their work,

particularly of those working in informal sector.¹

A number of study (Chant 1992; Yamanaka and Piper 2005; Ball and Piper 2006; Loveband 2006; Young 2006) has made feminization of labour migration as their focus, or at least as a major element. However, in most of those studies, women are mainly seen as “victims” of malpractices in the labour migration process. Our paper writing departs from an assumption that it is crucial to see women not only as “passive actors” in the context of labour migration. Therefore, it focuses on the potentials of female stakeholders, other than the migrant women workers themselves - such as activists, politicians, parliamentarians and other women stakeholders - in addressing the problems faced Indonesian women migrant workers. It particularly looks at the relative positions of the women stakeholders vis-a-vis the formulation of policies on the protection of Indonesian workers abroad; what they have done while they are or were in those positions and the opportunities they have been using and the challenges they are facing. It is expected that by doing so, this paper will contribute to the efforts of formulating and implementing a better protecting mechanism for Indonesian women migrant workers by identifying the efforts worth making by specific actors.

This research uses the arguments from policy studies because it is assumed that it is the official state policies that can have wide impact and be legally binding. Thus, if the aim is to formulate more pro women migrant workers policies, it is

¹ A discussion on the problems commonly faced by Indonesian women migrant workers at each stage of their migration process – pre-departure, departure, during employment, and post-employment – can be seen in Yazid, S., 2013, *Indonesia's Civil Society in the Age of Democratization: NGO Responses on the Issue of Labour Migration*, Baden-Baden: Nomos.

necessary to identify the existence and potentials of women who are involved in the labour migration process to maximize their contribution to the improvement of the protection of women migrant workers. For those reasons, this research uses the concept of policy process from policy studies. Although in practice it is almost impossible to draw a clear line between each stage of the policy proses and the stages do not always occur in sequence, in general the policy process involves *agenda-setting*, when an issue become the focus of attention of the government; *policy formulation*, when policy options are formulated by the government; *decision making*, when the government choose to act or not; *policy implementation*, when the policy is implemented; and *policy evaluation*, when the result or impact of the policy implementation is monitored by the government and other actors in the society and the result will trigger the start of the next policy cycle (Howlett, Perl and Ramesh 2003, p. 11). This research analyzes what certain women stakeholders can do at each stage of the policy process to ensure that the policies made and implemented can ensure the protection for women migrant workers. It looks into both domestic and foreign policies due to the crossing national borders characteristic of labor migration.

As mentioned in the first publication (Yazid 2015), the focus on identifying the position of women and what they have done and could do inspired by the work of Cynthia Enloe (2000), *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*. Therefore, this research portrays Indonesian women in the way that Enloe (2000, p. 15) calls as "beyond the global victim". Moving beyond the continuous discussion on how women became victims in the problematic migration process and starting to identify women with various positions and potentials within the labour migration

system will provide deeper understanding of the problems and contribute to the effort of providing protection for Indonesian women migrant workers abroad.

Literatures on public policy have identified actors perceived to be determining the process of making, implementing, and monitoring public policy. Simon (2007), for example, has identified the main actors in the formulation of policies. He also specifically identified them in the field of like defence, public health, education, etc. However, the discussion is still dominated by formal actors who are in the executive and legislative institutions. Interest groups are already mentioned but only referring to formal institutions that actually have access to the policy process. Therefore, this research aims to contribute to the policy studies with its focus on individual stakeholders. In 1984, John W. Kingdon published a book titled *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*, which has been up-dated and re-published several times since then. According to Kingdon (1984, p. 48) actors who do not hold formal position in the government include: interest groups, researcher, academic, consultant, media, party and other election related participants and the public in general. Kingdon admitted that it is obviously difficult to draw a clear line between those "inside" and "outside" the government. Particularly since the relations between both groupings are open and the flow of information is quite strong through networks built by these actors. Nevertheless, differentiation is still needed because those inside have formal authorities which those outside do not. Kingdon's initial arguments on how the identified actors influence the policy making in the United States are used as departing points of the discussion on the efforts made by the actors identified in this research.

Women policy influencer, the question of who where and what have they done

The initial stage of the field research was an identification of potential respondents, based on their past and present positions and activities within the migration system in order to later group them under the policy influencer grouping. It was able to identify around 20 women who are and/or were academics, journalists, doctors, social activists, lawyers, government officers, politicians, artists, and public figures. We decided and were able to contact and interview a number of them to represent each grouping of policy influencer, as formulated by Kingdon in his book. For an actor to be influential toward a policy making process, he or she should have access to the policy making process or be able to generate public opinion. Therefore, the respondents we chose are those who can access the policy making process and/or public figures who are likely to shape public opinion. They were interviewed with a set of questions, aimed at cultivating information on their relative positions vis-à-vis the policy making process, the efforts they have made to improve the protection of Indonesian women migrant workers, the opportunities they have made use of and the challenges they have faced. The result is as follows.

Interest Groups: an NGO activists

The first actor identified by Kingdon as an actor outside the government is interest group. According to Kingdon (1984, p. 52), interest groups conduct varied activities. It can take the form of influencing policy agenda or alternatives considered by policy makers. They can push for a new policy direction or even prevent changes to occur. They direct government's attention toward certain issue by mobilizing

supports, writing letters, sending delegations, and encouraging their partners to act similarly. The principle used here is the louder they are, the more they will be heard. However, Kingdon (1984, p. 53) also highlights that interest group is not the only determining factor for an issue to be considered by the government, there are others. Moreover, when an issue has become a policy agenda, interest group cannot control the rest of the process. Kingdon (1984, 54) also states that there are more cases where interest group reject policy agenda than where they suggest one.

To represent this type of actor, we chose Anis Hidayah, the Executive Director of Migrant Care, an NGO working on the protection of Indonesian migrant workers (Hidayah, 27 June 2014). Anis is not the only migrant workers advocates associated with an NGO but her activism and her public profile has made her one of the few that stands out. Furthermore, she is chosen to represent interest groups because as commonly found in Indonesia when an activist becomes the leader of an NGO, his/her works become more identical with organizations he/she is leading. This is apparent in the interview with Anis with her frequent reference to what Migrant CARE has done in answering the interview questions.

This research first identified the respondent's position vis-a-vis the process of making policies on the protection of Indonesian workers abroad. This information is used as a starting point in analyzing what they have done and the challenges and opportunities each respondent is facing. The basic assumption is that the closer a stakeholder to the center of policy making, the more influencing they can be. Mid-1990s, Anis was already a student activist which enabled her to interact with and join local organizations.

At that time she was already in touch with migrant workers issues and continued to do so when she started her career as a member of Solidaritas Perempuan East Java at the end of 1990s. Anis then became a volunteer in KOPBUMI² and established Migrant CARE³ in 2004. For her dedication in giving leverage to issues faced by Indonesian domestic workers in various countries and stopping a number of violence against them, she has been awarded *Alison Des Forges for Extraordinary Activism* by Human Rights Watch in 2012. Anis is also active at the regional and international level. In 2013, for example, she was involved in 100 Women Conference conducted by BBC. She is a Member of Executive Committee of Migrant Forum in Asia since 2008 and frequently joined regional forums on migrant workers. In 2014, Anis received another award in the field of human rights, Yap Thiam Hien Award.

For Anis Hidayah, relationship with the government has taken two forms, personal and institutional (Hidayah, 27 June 2014). Anis claimed to be personally close with a number of policy makers in the governmental institutions such as the Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ministry of Women Empowerment and Protection of Children. On the other hand, institutionally Anis described Migrant Care to be “face to face with” or in opposition to the government. While her organization is positioned rather away from the government, Anis makes use of personal lobbying in building rapport with policy makers. In terms of involvement in the stages of migration

process, according to Anis, Migrant Care exists at every stage, from providing information and trainings at the pre-recruitment stage to monitoring the going home process.

Stakeholders identified which effort is more dominant for their positions, whether it is personal or institutional, and whether the effort is directed more toward influencing policies or handling cases. Efforts made by Anis through Migrant Care include providing information media for pre-departure in the form of guide book, leaflet about the migrant workers’ rights and conducting trainings on safe migration and anti-trafficking for migrant workers communities. Migrant Care also provides legal assistance for migrant workers with legal problems. Migrant Care has also initiated migrant worker care village which is a model for protection at the village level by providing services from pre-recruitment to returning stage. By doing this, the village has control and role in protecting their people.

From all the efforts above, according to Anis the most dominant is case handling to ensure that migrant workers’ rights are fulfilled. The information gathered from the case handling process is then used to put pressure on the policy makers. Anis sees her efforts with her institution as efforts to organize the voice of migrant workers because the information gathered from case handling is also used to channel their voice through international organizations like ILO and national media and international media like the Jakarta Post, CNN and Al-Jazeera.

The impacts of an action made by a stakeholder are also determined by the partners they are working with. Anis could easily mentioned Migrant Care’s partners at each level. At the international level, their partners include Human Rights Watch,

² Consortium of Indonesian Migrant Workers Advocacy is a consortium of migrant workers advocates. Its main agenda was to pass a law on the protection of the rights of Indonesian migrant workers.

³A national NGO which focuses on strengthening the protection of migrant workers’s rights.

Amnesty Internasional, and Walk Free. At the regional level, Migrant Care is a part of Migrant Forum Asia. At the national level, Migrant Care joins networks of civil society organizations and at the local level they work with NGOs that are concern with the issue of women migrant workers. Their partners also come from various backgrounds, including social media like Change.org. The media supports in disseminating information on the issues of migrant workers to influence the policy makers. The media also form strong public solidarity toward the efforts made by Migrant Care.

The ability of stakeholders to identify and make use of the opportunities they have and also the ability to identify and overcome the challenges they are facing, determine the impacts of the efforts they make and the sustainability of the efforts. Anis Hidayah sees the existence of Migrant Care's networks as an opportunity because it can leverage the voice and pressures. As for challenges, Anis sees the involvement of the "mafia" as a big challenge because it involves a significant number of actors. The business practice which tendsto become a human trafficking practice and the lack of political will from the government are also considered as challenges.

Anis Hidayah's works with her organizations fit into what Kingdon (1984) describes as interest group. Personally and through her organization, Migrant Care, she has made various efforts to influence the processes of making and implementing policies to guarantee the fulfillment of migrant workers' rights, particularly those of women. The activities conducted by Anis with her organization tend to lean toward the efforts of changing policies and direct the attention of policy makers toward a certain aspect of the labour migration, in

this case protection, through various ways and medias. Anis' experience also confirms Kingdon's statement that influence is more likely to happen if the voice voicing it is louder. Anis through Migrant Care, tries hard to widen her network and use various media to amplify their voice. However, also in line with Kingdon's argument, their campaign is not strong enough to become a determiner in policy making because other factors such as issue or agenda preferences of policy makers and the focus of media attention still play determining roles.

Academics, Researchers, and Consultants: A Reputable Scholar

Kingdon position the group of academics, researchers and consultants as another influential non-state actor after interest group (Kingdon 1984, p. 57). His research found that politicians ask inputs from this group for matters of their concern and solutions for problems they are facing (Kingdon 1984, p. 59). In terms of short and long term impacts, according to Kingdon, academics tend to influence the framework of thinking in the long term. In the short time, policy makers will listen to academics when the analysis and proposal they made directly related to the problems which have already become their focus of attention (Kingdon 1984, p. 59). Therefore, if academics and researchers want to create short term impacts, they need to know what are in the mind of the policy makers or they need to be inside the government (Kingdon 1984, p. 59-60).

Sulistiyowati Irianto was chosen to represent this group because she is one of the leading Indonesian academics on the issue of labour migration with substantial research, publication and network (Iriyanto, 18 May 2014). Sulis is the Head of the Interdisciplinary Graduate Programme at

the University of Indonesia and a Professor of Law Anthropology at the same university. From 2002 to 2010 she became the Head of Center for Women and Gender Studies in University of Indonesia. She is one of the editors of *Jurnal Perempuan* and the writer of a number of books on women and law, including that on access to justice for Indonesian domestic workers in UAE which she wrote in 2008. In 2014 Sulis received an award as a scholar with outstanding achievements from a national newspaper, *Kompas*.

As a researcher, Sulis has conducted researches and disseminated the results of her researches to policy makers through the Ministry of Manpower and members of the parliament. Her research which was funded by a research center in Canada has been turned into a book and policy briefs for countries needing it, advocacy materials for NGOs, and presentations in various seminars. During her time in the Center for Women and Gender Studies, she also conducted research and policy advocacy with NGOs to amend UU 39/2004 on the placement and protection of Indonesian workers abroad.

In terms of her relative position to policy makers, Sulis could not pin point her position. She even stated, "I do not really know if they listen enough, if they are curious enough, and if they actually read my writings". According to Sulis, this condition might be related to the condition of the bureaucracies who are difficult in accommodating changes, the corruption practices, and the absence of courageous and visionary leaders. In terms of the stages of migration, Sulis as an academic looks into the whole process.

In conducting her activities, Sulis has worked with NGOs at the local level

such as SBMI⁴ and Komnas Perempuan⁵. Although the cooperation between them is not continuous, tend to happen only when needed to address cases, it can be seen that as an academic, Sulis is not isolated in what is usually known as "the ivory tower". She tries to vary her efforts and interact with various actors.

Unfortunately, Sulis tends to see that her opportunity as an academic is small. As she stated: "As an academic I do not feel that I have power. We have small power, only conducting research, making policy brief, giving recommendation, helping NGOs, and conducting law reform." This shows that academics are still positioned within the outer ring of the process of making policies on migrant workers. As for challenges, Sulis mentioned financial one considering research grant is usually not big and the lack of support from the government in terms of permissions to conduct research. Therefore, Sulis choose to build her networks abroad including with academics in destination country such as Saudi Arabia.

Sulis' statements have led to a confirmation of Kingdon's arguments. The policy brief, research and books produced by Sulis can be used by related and interested stakeholders, particularly the government. They can be used to seek for both short term and long term solutions. Nevertheless, whether her works are utilized or not really depends on the policy makers and to date, Sulis still perceived that academics do not have big enough influence on the policy making process. Using Kingdon's terms, Sulis is not inside the government and she does not know what are in the mind of the policy makers.

⁴ Indonesian Migrant Workers Union

⁵ National Commission on Violence Against Women

Media: A Veteran Journalist

Kingdon sees media as an actor that influentially determines policy agendas because the media can influence public opinion (Kingdon 1984, p. 61). According to him, media coverage on a certain issue influence the attention of policy makers because as members of the society policy makers also follow coverages from the mass media and the media influence their constituents. However, his research revealed that the influence is not as big as expected. He thinks that one of the reasons is the tendency for media to cover an issue only for a short period of time and immediately move to the next one (Kingdon 1984, p. 62). Kingdon also thinks that the tendency for media to cover an issue which is newsworthy in a dramatic way also reduce the impacts on the determination of policy agendas because news usually tend to be dramatic towards the end of a policy making process. Nevertheless, Kingdon sees the importance of mass media in other forms (Kingdon 1984, pp. 63-64). First, media can become communicators in a policy community, connecting those who are inside the government with those outside. This kind of communication also occurs through non-daily media such as journals in certain field. Second, media can widen a movement which has been initiated at certain places by speeding the development and amplifying the impacts. Third, if the assumption is that public opinion influence participants in policy making, then the attention of the participants toward public opinion shows the importance of media. Fourth, although those who are already inside or have direct access probably will not need the media, those who are outside the policy making process need the media to get the attention of government officers.

To represent the media, the chosen respondent is Dewi Anggraeni, a woman

now living in Australia (Anggraeni, 19 May 2014). Dewi is well-known as one of the senior journalists among journalists in Indonesia and Australia. She writes for leading media in Indonesia like *Majalah Tempo* and English newspaper *The Jakarta Post* and she is also a contributor to Australian media such as *The Age*, *The Australian Financial Review* and *The Canberra Times*. In 2006 Dewi recorded the stories of Indonesian women migrant workers in Singapore, Malaysia, and Hongkong, supported by the International Labor Organization, in a book titled *Dreamseekers: Indonesian Women as Domestic Workers in Asia*.

The beginning of Dewi's interest towards the issue of migrant workers reflects how the media perceives an issue. As she stated:

"After I observed it for years, because as a journalist I actually did not specialize on the issue of migrant workers. But after years of paying close attention, I then notice that what the media is covering is something interesting. If there is nothing interesting or there is no news value in it, it will not be published."

Her statement highlights the fact that an issue can only become a news item if it has selling value. Thus, Dewi decided to write a book which is more continuously accessible, consisting of a summary of the situation faced by Indonesian migrant workers. Until now, the book is still used as a reference by a number of researches on Indonesian migrant workers.

In identifying the efforts that she has made, Dewi stated that as a writer and a journalist she continues to write topics related to the issues faced by women migrant workers, in general media like

Tempo and the Jakarta Globe and women media like Pesona. From the feedback she received, Dewi feels that the readers are moved by the opinions and columns she wrote. In terms of migration stages, Dewi believes that her work covers all stages. Dewi also claims to have worked with various actors. Unfortunately, on the same note with Sulis, Dewi also does not believe that she can influence policies. As she stated, "Only when my book is read by people and it helps people to understand, then the people can put pressure on the government. So it is a long way. Direct influence does not exist." It shows how the influence of media occurs through the shaping of public opinion which is then expected to put pressure on the government.

For opportunities, Dewi sees her access to the media as an opportunity which she continues to use. As for challenges, Dewi mentioned the values in the Indonesian society, the negative behavior of the women domestic workers which create stigma and negative stereotype on women migrant workers, and distortion of values. She also sees that what exist in the society is reflected in the government. That is why Dewi tries to change the existing stigma through the stories which she wrote and the people read.

Dewi's opinion is in line with Kingdon's statement that the influence of mass media is yet to be as big as expected. The writings of Dewi Anggraeni are yet to significantly shape public opinion, let alone influence the attention of legislators. Her writings are still at the stage of moving the people reading her book. Moreover, the duration of an issue to stay as a headline really depends on its selling value, often too short to shape public opinion. In the case of women migrant workers another factor that needs to be considered is the magnitude of

the media coverage at the time it was covered. The case of Nirmala Bonat⁶ and Nunukan⁷ for example, the time span of the coverage was not that long but they were quite big and supported by migrant workers' advocates that it led to a policy change (Yazid 2013, p. 28). This has further confirmed that influence is also determined by the number of actors involved.

Elections-Related Participants: Members of Parliament

According to Kingdon, because election produces officers who eventually will make important decisions in the government, election influences policy agendas (Kingdon 1984, p. 65). The promises made during campaigns can influence policy agendas but Kingdon do not see it as an automatic process because it still requires commitment from those chosen (Kingdon 1984, p. 67). In relation to election, Kingdon also thinks that the political party's platform influence policy agendas. It becomes interesting in Indonesia's context where political party is seen to be not having clear enough platforms, where political parties are still relying on figure popularity and where money politic is still an issue. To confirm the influence of election-related participants, we chose two women figure from a political party which is often associated with the issue of migrant workers.

⁶ Nirmala Bonat is one of the many Indonesia women migrant workers abused in Malaysia whose case caught the attention of many, especially the media.

⁷ Nunukan is a district at the border between Indonesia and Malaysia in the island of Kalimantan (Borneo). In 2002 thousands of undocumented Indonesian migrant workers were deported by Malaysia and stranded in Nunukan

Ribka Tjiptaning (19 August 2014)

This figure is chosen because she led Commission IX of DPR-RI (Manpower and Transmigration, Demography and Health) where the issue of migrant workers was included in it for the period of 2009-2014. Ribka took the political track by becoming the member of PDIP since 1983 and she has served as a member and the head of Commission IX for two periods. With her background as a doctor, Ribka was assigned to this commission and since the commission also covers the issue of labour, Ribka also dealt with the issue of migrant workers.

Ribka emphasized that their efforts as the parliamentarians were made with the government. As a member of the parliament she claimed to have urged, pushed, and put pressures in meeting with related ministries. Ribka sees this as a political contract with the people which if not implemented should be sanctioned. Through the parliament, she also formed a special team and a monitoring team which involved members from other commissions. For the issue of migrant workers, according to Ribka their governmental partners are BNP2TKI,⁸ and the Ministry of Manpower. But from her explanation, it can be assumed that the relationship is not that good. Ribka also stated that she often had to face challenges from the legal umbrella, such as laws. Therefore, she argued for a bigger role of the state leader.

Ribka believes that one of the challenges is Indonesia's weak bargaining power because it does not have a law on domestic worker. While in the parliament, the challenges she faced was the existence of fears among the parliamentarians such as fears that Indonesian domestic workers are

not yet ready to compete for more skilled works and fears that the domestic workers will form a union, combined with the thick existence of feudalism culture. According to her, these have hindered the process of formulating the law on domestic workers and the revision of law No. 39/2004. Ribka also hoped for greater spontaneity from the members of the government. She would like to see the members of parliament to actually go to the field and give material assistance, not just trying to solve the problems through series of meetings. Ribka also hopes for the increase of the number of women in the parliament because she believes that with the sharper and more motherly women instinct, there will be deeper empathy. She also believes that women have stronger determination which makes it more difficult to "lobby" them. Ribka argues that women need to take strategic and key position in the political parties, not only as a complimentary element to fulfill the quota. She further argues that it is difficult for women to be independent in the parliament because political parties are their "vehicles" limiting their actions to those in accordance with the parties' agendas. As for challenges outside the parliament, Ribka also sees the understanding of the migrant workers as something difficult to change because they already believe that being a woman migrant worker is a solution.

Rieke Dyah Pitaloka (25 August 2014)

Rieke is an actress turned parliamentarian from PDIP. As a parliament member, Rieke believes that she has implemented her legislative function by fighting for the bill on migrant workers to be included in the National Legislation Programme in 2009 with her extra-parliamentary network which included

⁸ National Agency for Placement and Protection of Indonesian Overseas Workers

NGOs. She was also active in the parliament's working group and special committee.

With the view that the people's representatives seem to be in a 'glass house', Rieke thinks that they should open communication and be monitored by all their constituents. That is why she always tried to work with civil society organisations and their networks. Rieke even recruited a researcher from ECOSOC Institute as her staff to assist in the discussion process of legislations and communicate with the network outside the parliament. Rieke also tries to make the meeting of the working group in the parliament to be open for public. Since this is yet to be possible in every parliamentary meeting, she assigns her staff to be present in the meetings and disseminate the information they gathered to their networks. Her interactions with those concerned with the issue of Indonesian migrant workers, including academics, researchers, and heads of local governments are in the form of inviting them to give inputs.

Rieke sees her status as a parliament member as an opportunity which she make use by asking to be assigned in the commission which take care of the issues of migrant workers. She stated that her party allows its members to propose the position they want according to their qualification. Interestingly, different from Ribka, she refused to consider the fact that she is a woman as a differentiating or determining factor. Rieke perceives the political fights in the legislation process as a challenge. Her effort is to fight it through parliamentary and extra-parliamentary movements. She also tries to make the parliament to actually become the representatives of the people and to allow public control or active citizenship to be present in the parliaments'

meeting rooms by informing the meetings' schedule. Rieke also sees the lack of political will from the policy makers to protect Indonesian migrant workers as a challenge. According to her, parliament members have to have the perspective of welfare for all Indonesians.

In a slightly different point of view, Ribka and Rieke who come from the same political party has committed to the making of policies on migrant workers. To a certain extent, both of them have confirmed Kingdon's opinion that what is done by members of the parliament is really determined by the stand of his/her political party. Although whether Indonesian political parties have platforms or not is still a big question, it can be said that these two women can continuously fight for the protection of women migrant workers because their party allows them to do so. Another point worth highlighted is that although there is a special quota for women in the parliament, their influence is still limited by a number of factors such as the small number, the not so strategic position, and the compliance to political party's stand.

Public Figure: A Vocal Celebrity

This category is not mentioned by Kingdon but we believe that it should be included because in Indonesian society, public figure, particularly the celebrities are often viewed as capable in forming public opinion. To represent the women from this category, we choose Melanie Subono, known as a celebrity⁹ who is quite vocal and concern about the issues of Indonesian migrant workers and anti-slavery (Subono, 27 June 2014). Melanie started with her close

⁹ Melanie Subono is a singer and the daughter of a well-known concert promotor in Indonesia.

relationship with Suci Munir, the wife of the late Munir. She then studied the case of Marsinah and other labour cases. Aware of her position as a public figure, this woman has been using social media as a tool to increase awareness among Indonesians about the issues of migrant workers. Melanie's efforts and achievements motivated Migrant Care to ask her to be their ambassador. Melanie sees herself as a campaigner, a socializer, ambassador of Migrant Care, ambassador of Walk Free who is also learning to go to the field.

About proximity to the decision maker, Melanie feels that decision makers are not open to the people. Melanie is more focusing on the victim or in other words when the problems surface but she is trying to be involved in the preparation stage. Melanie sees the young generation of Indonesia as apathetic because they are rarely involved in the discussion on politics, rights and laws. She would like the talks on human rights to be part of a lifestyle. To do so, Melanie use social media like twitter and facebook to run fun and friendly campaigns to be close to the people.

According to Melanie, her main effort is to inform and encourage society's movement. Therefore Melanie sees the society as her main partner. The significant number of her follower in social media is also seen as an opportunity to spread information. As for the challenge, she mentioned the inability of people in strategic positions. Personally, she has to sacrifice her artistic work because her albums are considered non-commercial. She also gets fewer invitations to perform on TV and on stages compared to before she actively campaign on human rights issues, including those of women migrant workers, because she is considered as a provocator. Stereotype also becomes a hindrance for

her, for she is less respected for wearing tattoos.

Melanie's experience is yet to prove a strong influence on process of making policies on women migrant workers. Her campaigns have not resulted in a mayor policy changes. Nevertheless, her actions have brought the issue to a bigger audience, particularly the younger generation, which in many cases today is believed to be the potential target to be influenced if change is expected.

As the above discussion shows, there is a difference in the way the questions are answered, depending on the status of the respondent in their institutions. Those with more independent professions like journalists and academics tend to refer to efforts, opportunities and challenges related to herself as an individual. Meanwhile, for those in a larger institution, the same questions tend to be answered with reference to their institutions. While working individually may give independency, affiliation with an institution may allow bigger impact, thus stronger influence. The interviews also show how the women actors perceive their identity as women differently. Some respondents see their identity as a woman as a potential differentiating factor which may contribute to the betterment of their activisms. Others, however, argue that the differentiation is not necessary. In the context of influencing the policy making process, these women who are mainly outside the main circle of policy making do not see their influence on policy making as something significant. Although most respondents described their efforts to influence policies, none of them can have a strong claim on an actual policy change or formulation. When talking about opportunities and challenges, most of the respondents see their positions, professions and institutions as sources of opportunities and conditions outside such as political and

policy environment and policy makers' political will as sources of challenges. In other words the perception of opportunity tends to be inward while challenges tend to be outward. Finally, in a rather successful instances, the policy making process can only be influenced significantly when the pressures are simultaneous from various actors in a significant magnitude. While the women are important parts of the efforts, they are not exclusive sources of influence.

Conclusion

This research has identified and classified a number of women which are seen as influential in the effort to protect Indonesian women migrant workers. In general the data obtained by asking the questions set by this research confirmed the arguments put forward by John W. Kingdon on the influence of a number of actors outside the government on policy making. While interest groups, in this case migrant workers advocate, can conduct various activities to influence the policy making process, the actual influence created are very much determined by the strength of the interest groups' voices and how accommodative the policy making system is. The academics, with their type of works which mainly involve research have better chances with long term impacts. As for the media, although the influence is not as strong as generally expected, it still plays a significant role in shaping public opinion which should be one of the main inputs for policy making process. The election-related participants, in this case parliamentarians, still have to adhere to their parties' agendas and platforms, giving them limited room to maneuver, especially if the party does not see the issue of women migrant workers as one of their main concerns. One type of actor identified in this research, not by Kingdon, is a celebrity or a public figure. In

a country like Indonesia where public figures are highly adored, the public figures may not have direct formal access to the policy making process but they have strong influence on the creation and shaping of public opinions. The women interviewed for this research play active and significant roles within Indonesia's migration system. Nevertheless their efforts are frequently limited by external factors. As for their identity as women, some see it as irrelevant while others believe that there are aspects attached to the identity that can be used to strengthen their efforts.

About the Author

Sylvia Yazid, Ph.D is the head of International Relations Department, Faculty of Social and Political Science in Parahyangan Catholic University, Bandung. Sylvia Yazid can be reached at sylvia_yazid@yahoo.com. Detail profile see; <http://hi.unpar.ac.id/sylvia-yazid/>.

Elisabeth S. Dewi, Ph.D is a lecturer at Parahyangan Catholic University, Bandung. Detail profile see; <http://hi.unpar.ac.id/elisabeth-a-s-dewi/>.

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